



CHAIRMAN

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20415

May 11, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Subject: Use of Employment Goals and Timetables in  
Agency Equal Employment Opportunity Programs

Since the issuance of Executive Order 11478 by President Nixon, we have had discussions with agencies regarding the inclusion of numerical employment goals and timetables in equal employment opportunity action plans and instructions and we have approved their use in some agency action plans.

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize and make clear our policy on this matter.

A "goal" is a realistic objective which an agency endeavors to achieve on a timely basis within the context of the merit system of employment. A "quota", on the other hand, would restrict employment or development opportunities to members of particular groups by establishing a required number or proportionate representation which agency managers are obligated to attain without regard to merit system requirements. "Quotas" are incompatible with merit principles.

The establishment of goals and timetables is a useful management concept and should be used where they will contribute to the resolution of equal employment opportunity problems. Affirmative action to attain goals must be carried out in the context of the merit system for public employment. The merit system is designed to assure a fair opportunity for all persons. The establishment of reasonable employment goals and timetables, as distinguished from mandatory quotas, in connection with minority employment, is compatible with this principle.

Some further amplification of this policy may be helpful to agencies:

1. When goals and timetables are appropriate

Employment goals and timetables should be established in problem areas where progress is recognized as necessary and where such goals and timetables will contribute to progress, i.e., in those organizations and localities and in those occupations and grade levels where minority employment

is not what should reasonably be expected in view of the potential supply of qualified members of minority groups in the work force and in the recruiting area and available opportunities within the organization. The skills composition of the minority group population in the recruiting area used by the organization and the occupational nature of the jobs in the organization must be considered. For example, professional positions are usually filled from a regional or national labor market while trades and clerical positions are usually filled from the local labor market.

2. Organizational considerations

To be meaningful, goals and timetables should be developed according to organizational levels and components rather than establishing agency-wide goals which do not take into account local circumstances or occupational differences. In this way, detailed minority group statistics, such as those required by FPM Letter 290-3, will aid in identifying areas where additional affirmative action is required and can be translated into specific action plans for the level or component concerned.

3. Relation to manpower planning

To be valid, goals and timetables must be closely meshed with estimated turnover data and anticipated hiring as well as estimated changes in the total number of positions, occupation by occupation, for the period covered by the timetable.

4. Reasonableness and flexibility

Employment goals and target dates should be reasonable and flexible indicators for management action. If goals and timetables are reasonably and realistically established, they will probably be met through appropriate affirmative action. Where they are not met, the reasons for this should be assessed by agency management to see if the goals or target dates for their achievement should be adjusted or if additional affirmative actions are needed, including the further commitment of resources to agency recruitment and upward mobility efforts.

5. Relation to action plans

Goals and timetables, when established for an organization, should become one part of the organization's EEO action

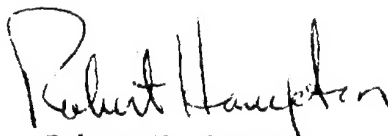
plan but are not sufficient in themselves. Since goals can be attained only through affirmative action, a broad range of specific action items should also be included as outlined in Section 2-5 of FPM Chapter 713.

6. Agency Actions

Goals and timetables must not be interpreted by managers and supervisors as quotas. Agency action plans and instructions involving goals and timetables must state that all actions to achieve goals must be in full compliance with merit system requirements. Agencies should provide guidance to installation managers on the establishment and proper use of goals and timetables and training should be provided to managers and supervisors regarding the purpose and use of goals and timetables.

The Commission reviews all agency-wide plans of action as they are revised and reissued. To the extent that we have suggestions for improvement to offer, we communicate with the agency. Where problems are noted which will lend themselves to resolution by establishing or updating numerical goals and timetables, we will include such recommendations in furtherance of the equal employment opportunity program.

In summary, we believe the use by agencies of employment goals and timetables in recognized problem areas in the manner described in this memorandum will be a useful means of encouraging affirmative action on equal employment opportunity and achieving the results to which we are all committed.



Robert E. Hampton  
Chairman